



February 18, 2022

Re: Mask Mandate

Dear Washington Township Staff and Families,

The Washington Township Pandemic Response Health and Safety Team met this week to discuss the lifting of the mask mandate announced for March 7, 2022, by Governor Murphy. The team unanimously has recommended that, due to the dramatic decrease in Covid cases in Gloucester County and in our schools and due to the implementation of the test-to-stay program that offers free testing to our community seven days a week, the Washington Township School District will be **mask optional beginning Monday, March 7, 2022**, in all District buildings.

Our Health and Safety Team includes our District physician, multiple nurses, regular education and special education teachers, administrators, support staff, parents, board members, and representatives from our after-school program. I want to personally thank the members of this team for their ongoing efforts and extraordinary work to help ensure the health and safety of our students and staff throughout the pandemic. We have revised The Road Forward, which is a District policy, and will recommend its approval by the Board of Education at the February 22, 2022, public meeting.

We believe the availability of free testing at our schools is an excellent defense against the spread of the virus. Individuals who are exposed will have access to ongoing testing and test results that give us all the best chance to take the necessary precautions in our homes to prevent further spread. All other mitigating strategies like cleaning and disinfecting, etc., will remain in place in all of our buildings.

This week, the District picked up a free shipment of 10,000 KN95 masks that will be made available, while supplies last, to staff and students who want to continue to mask. Our goal and top priority have always been to provide an educational environment where our students, staff, and families feel safe.

We have all looked forward to positive changes as we have navigated through this pandemic over the last two years. We deeply appreciate the patience and support you have shown during this most challenging time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe Bollendorf". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Mr. Joseph Bollendorf, Superintendent